

REMARKS

Double Patenting Rejection

Claims 1-6, 10-13 and 15 were rejected under the judicially created doctrine of couple patenting over claims 1-8 of U.S. Patent No. 6,626,776.

A terminal disclaimer for U.S. Patent No. 6,626,776 is enclosed herewith, together with the required fee.

Claims 1-6, 10-13 and 15 were rejected under the judicially created doctrine of couple patenting over an unspecified claim of U.S. Patent No. 6,517,454.

A terminal disclaimer for U.S. Patent No. 6,517,454 is enclosed herewith, together with the required fee.

Claim Rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102

Claims 1, 6, 10, 20, 21, 26, 30 and 40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Smith (U.S. Pat. No. 5,322,297).

Claim Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 7-9 and 27-29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Smith in view of Armstrong, et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,554,727).

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 14, 16-19, 22-25, 31-34 and 36-39 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were indicated allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Responsive thereto, claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 14, claim 21 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 22, claim 31 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 21, and claim 36 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 21.

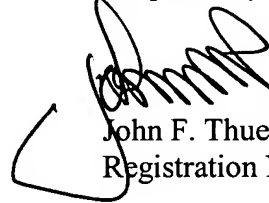
CONCLUSION

Claims 1-40 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 14, 22, and 37 are canceled, and claims 1, 21, 23-25, 31, 36, and 38-40 are amended. All pending claims are in condition for allowance.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned if the Examiner believes it would be useful to advance prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John F. Thunte', is written over the printed name and registration number.

John F. Thunte
Registration No. 29,595

Customer No. 24113
Patterson, Thunte, Skaar & Christensen, P.A.
4800 IDS Center
80 South 8th Street
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-2100
Telephone: (612) 349-5747